

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An instrument kit for performing a repair procedure on a meniscal tear in a knee for use in combination with a meniscal repair device, the instrument kit comprising:

at least one template including an elongate body defining X, Y and Z axes, the elongate body adapted for insertion in a knee of the patient to approximate a path to a meniscal tear within the knee, the elongate body having a length along the X-axis sufficient to access the meniscal tear and a reduced profile to facilitate passage thereto, a height along the Z-axis and a width along the Y-axis, the width being substantially less than the height, wherein the elongate body includes an atraumatic tip to reduce injury to tissue within the knee and wherein the atraumatic tip includes a distal end surface defining a dimple formed therein that is configured and adapted to engage a fastener in order to facilitate driving of the fastener into underlying tissue, whereby, upon subsequent removal of the one template from the knee, a correspondingly dimensioned meniscal repair device is introduced along the path to the meniscal tear for repair thereof, the at least one template defining a longitudinal axis and further including attachment structure formed at a proximal end thereof; and

a handle having receiving structure formed at a distal end thereof corresponding in configuration to the attachment structure of the at least one template, the receiving structure being configured to selectively receive the attachment structure in a snap-fit arrangement such that the at least one template is releasably engagable with the handle, wherein the snap-fit arrangement enables the application of both a proximally directed longitudinal force and a distally directed longitudinal force to the elongate body to facilitate access to and removal from the meniscal tear by the at least one template.

Claims 2-3 (Canceled).

4. (Original) The instrument kit according to claim 1, wherein the at least one template includes an elongate body having a distal end portion which is obliquely arranged with respect to the X-axis.

5. (Original) The instrument kit according to claim 4, wherein the distal end portion of the elongate body is offset in a direction of the Y-axis.

6. (Original) The instrument kit according to claim 4, wherein the distal end portion of the elongate body is offset in a direction of the Z-axis.

Claims 7-9 (Canceled).

10. (Original) The instrument kit according to claim 1, further comprising:

at least one disposable loading unit corresponding in size and shape to the at least one template, the at least one disposable loading unit including an elongate body defining X, Y and Z axes and being adapted to follow the path to the meniscal tear.

11. (Original) The instrument kit according to claim 10, including a plurality of disposable loading units, wherein a first disposable loading unit includes a substantially linear elongate body, a second disposable loading unit includes a distal end portion which is offset in a direction of the Y-axis, and a third disposable loading unit includes a distal end portion which is offset in a direction of the Z-axis.

Claims 12-20 (Canceled).

21. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 1, wherein the receiving structure formed at the distal end of the handle includes a bore and a groove.

22. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 21, wherein the attachment structure formed at the proximal end of the at least one template includes a proximal end portion and a lock rod, the lock rod extending along an axis transverse in relation to the longitudinal axis.

23. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 22, wherein the bore and the groove are configured to respectively receive the proximal end portion and the lock rod.

24. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 23, wherein the bore is substantially rectangular in shape and orthogonally oriented with respect to the groove.

25. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 23, wherein the groove defines a first depth and the bore defines a second depth, the second depth being greater than the first depth.

26. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 25, wherein the groove has a distal portion defining a first height and a proximal portion defining a second height.

27. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 26, wherein the lock rod defines a transverse dimension relative to the longitudinal axis defined by the at least one template that is greater than the first height and less than the second height .

28. (Currently amended) An instrument kit for performing a repair procedure on a meniscal tear in a knee for use in combination with a meniscal repair device, the instrument kit comprising:

at least one template including an elongate body defining X, Y and Z axes, the elongate body adapted for insertion in a knee of the patient to approximate a path to a meniscal tear within the knee, the elongate body having a length along the X-axis sufficient to access the meniscal tear and a reduced profile to facilitate passage thereto, wherein the elongate body includes an atraumatic tip to reduce injury to tissue within the knee, whereby, upon subsequent removal of the one template from the knee, a correspondingly dimensioned meniscal repair device is

introduced along the path to the meniscal tear for repair thereof, the at least one template defining a longitudinal axis and further including attachment structure formed at a proximal end thereof; and

a handle having receiving structure formed at a distal end thereof corresponding in configuration to the attachment structure of the at least one template, the receiving structure being configured to selectively receive the attachment structure in a snap-fit arrangement such that the at least one template is releasably engagable with the handle, wherein the snap-fit arrangement enables the application of both a proximally directed longitudinal force and a distally directed longitudinal force to the elongate body to facilitate access to and removal from the meniscal tear by the at least one template.

29. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 22, wherein the lock rod extends transversely through the proximal end portion of the at least one template.

30. (Previously presented) An instrument kit for performing a repair procedure on a meniscal tear in a knee for use in combination with a meniscal repair device, the instrument kit comprising:

a first template including a first elongate body with a first proximal end, the first elongate body defining a substantially linear configuration along an entire length thereof;

a second template including a second elongate body with a second proximal end, the second template including a distal end portion curving in a first direction to define a first arc;

a third template including a third elongate body having a third proximal end, the third template including a distal end portion curving in a second direction to define a second arc, wherein the second direction is different than the first direction; and

a handle configured and dimensioned for selective engagement with the proximal ends of the first, second, and third templates such that the handle is interchangeably employable therewith to facilitate insertion and manipulation of the first, second, and third templates within a patient's knee to approximate a path to a meniscal tear.

31. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 30, wherein the proximal ends of the first, second, and third templates each include attachment structure corresponding in configuration to receiving structure formed at a distal end of the handle such that the proximal ends of the first, second, and third templates are selectively engagable with the handle in snap-fit arrangement.

32. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 30, wherein the first arc and the second arc are substantially equivalent.

33. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 30, wherein the second arc is greater than the first arc.

34. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 30, wherein the first arc lies substantially within the range of approximately 5° to approximately 15°.

35. (Previously presented) The instrument kit according to claim 30, wherein the second arc lies substantially within the range of approximately 15° to approximately 45°.